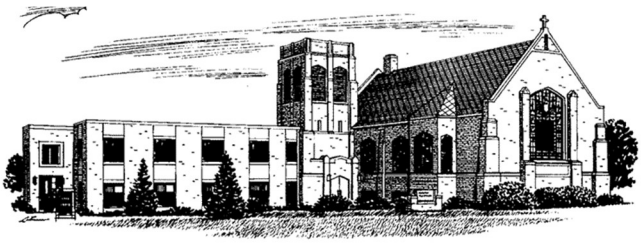
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Summer of 2023 (began May 28):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins Sep 10):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*

PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR JUNE 2023

Summertime. I love the warmer temps, the ability to "play in the dirt" and a bit of change in the routine of a programmatic year. Of course, living near Lake Michigan provides all kinds of opportunities.

Besides a change in our worship time, the summer also provides some alternative opportunities within Saron's ministry. Some examples are the location of the Thursday morning Bible study (meeting outdoors) and varying individuals and ensembles offering musical gifts on a Sunday morning. (Sure, you can volunteer!)

In the coming months you will also find that we will introduce the "whys" behind some of the parts of our liturgy, such as "why do we do a confession and forgiveness" at the beginning of our worship time? Or "these words from the liturgy come directly from this part of Scripture." I look forward to a season of exploration and new or renewed opportunities. And, I look forward to sharing them with you.

-Pastor Joan

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Special thank you to Claudia Staude and Jim Manore for attending the 2023 Synod Assembly in Mt. Pleasant. They accompanied Pastor Joan as voting members. We look forward to hearing a recap of their thoughts on the gathering soon.

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kathleen & Phillip Preston are at Caretel in St. Joseph;
Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at the Willows in St. Joseph.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/2	Ann Dosch
6/4	June Embree
6/5	Judi Huff
6/6	Danielle Hohman
6/6	Dale Lucy
6/7	Nicholas Maly
6/7	Elinor Van Egmond
6/11	Maeva Bommarito
6/11	Tyler Cook
6/12	Charles Kohs
6/12	Stephania Ngonyani
6/12	Deborah Vollmer
6/15	Hunter Zwar
6/16	Marilyn Frey
6/18	James Peterson
6/20	Cami Vitek
6/22	Larry Weber
6/26	Phillip Preston
6/27	Carol Hafer
6/29	David Young

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/1	Brian & Coanne Hohman
6/2	Deanna & Robert Deaton
6/12	Lindsay & Scott Gaspari
6/16	Kathie & Dave Bradley
6/17	Kathy & Gary Cowall
6/17	Joan & James Oleson
6/21	Dan & Sue Fortenbacher
6/25	Richard & Dawn Osgood
6/27	Claire & Kyle Carter
6/28	Gayle & James Peterson
6/30	Don & Carol Hafer
6/30	Janet & William Oleson

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

We were honored to witness as
Ava Wei Shi Jing Osgood
and
Alaina Ann Bradley
affirmed their faith through Confirmation on May 7, 2023. If these young ladies are part of the future of our church, we are fortunate indeed.

FAREWELL & GODSPEED

We wish Juliet, Stephania, Pauline, and Evance farewell and wish them God's blessing as they make their way to a warmer climate in Chandler, AZ. We look forward to staying in touch.

FORTIFY & fly

Join us on **Sunday, June 25** as we celebrate the many blessings this capital campaign has brought to Saron. We will commemorate Fortify & Fly and being able to pay off our mortgage during the service and afterwards with an ice cream social. More information in special article.

Worship

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Wednesday Zoom Coffee Hour at 11am as long as there is interest. All are welcome!

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page. We do not put names with the pictures. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor.

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery Is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

June 4: The Holy Trinity
Genesis 1:1–2:4
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

June 11: Second Sunday after Pentecost
Hosea 5:15-6:6
Psalm 50:7-15
Romans 4:13-25
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

June 18: Third Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 19:2-8
Psalm 100
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35- 10:23

June 25: Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 20:7-13
Psalm 69:7-18
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:24-39

YOUTH GROUP

Our youth group (middle school and high school kids) typically meets once per month after a service for lunch, fun and fellowship. Watch your email for more information on the next gathering. Friends are always welcome!

Contact Claudia at Staude.claudia@gmail.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Saron is excited to announce

Under the Sea:
How Deep is God's Love?

This fun and interactive Vacation Bible School experience, targeted towards kids preschool through 5th grade, will take place **Monday, July 31 – Thursday, August 3**. There will be crafts, outdoor activities, lessons, music and more! Watch for more information in the coming months, including volunteer needs and registration.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 10. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

Bible Study

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Our Bible study continues during the summer months as we gather to study the upcoming Sunday's Gospel reading. We will meet on Thursday mornings at 9:30am outside, at the church building. This discussion is open to all interested in attending, for one session or many. Contact Pastor Joan if you have any questions.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Through June 20, we will finish reading and discussing "Your God is Too Small," by J. B. Phillips. The book explores the ways in which we can find a truly meaningful and constructive God for ourselves, big enough to account for our life experiences and big enough to command our highest admiration and respect. So far, the material has been quite thought provoking and led to spirited discussion. It's still not too late to join us!

Starting June 27, we will do week-to-week studies for the remainder of the summer, focusing on the lessons and Gospel reading for the next Sunday, with perhaps a Father Casey Cole video here and there. Hope to see you there!

We meet Tuesday evenings at 6pm in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. All are welcome!

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

FORUM & fellowship

Helping the Blind to See!

Join us **Wednesday, June 7** for our final session before a summer break. We are hosting Roger Caleb from Vision Outreach International, who will be telling us about this group's ministry of providing eye care for people in developing world nations. Access to cataract surgery can not only be life changing for these people, but also, life saving. The session is at 7 pm in Saron's lounge. You don't want to miss this, and it's not necessary to have attended any previous sessions. Everyone is welcome!

During the program year, we typically meet the first and third Wednesday of each month in the lounge from 7pm to 8:30pm. We'll pick up again in the fall. Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

Random cute picture in the corner just because we can.

2023-2024 1ST SUNDAY BOOK GROUP SELECTIONS

The votes are in and these are the choices for another year of good reads! Notice we added August and September to allow more opportunities for discussion.

Aug 6 Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver
Sep 10 Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus
Oct 1 Last Bus to Wisdom by Ivan Doig
Nov 5 Everything Happens For a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved by Kate Bowler
Dec 3 The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman
Feb 4 Second Glance by Jodi Pioult
Mar 3 Chronicles of a Radical Haag (with recipes) by Lorna Landvik
Apr 7 Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt
May 5 Black Cake by Charmaine Wilkerson

"Reading is a means of thinking with another person's mind: it forces you to stretch your own."
-Charles Scribner, Jr.

If you want to be on the mailing list to receive all book group information and Zoom links, call Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will meet on **Wednesday, June 14 at 7pm** in the church lounge. Denise will provide Zoom with a link emailed closer to the date. The Bible study lesson will be from the March/April issue of Gather magazine entitled *The Ten Commandments: revising the soul; trail markers for love of God and neighbor (commandments 7-10)*, p 34-39, session four. Mary Kynast will lead the study.

If you have any questions about the meeting or this group, contact Melanie at 269/449-8399.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

BLOSSOMTIME PARADE LUNCH

We were overjoyed to be a blessing to our community on May 13 before and during the Blossomtime Parade. We served 200+ hot dog sack lunches. Our facilities were also gratefully used and respected, leaving very little cleanup. We thank all those that made this day possible, especially Judi Huff, Kati Hooper, and Amanda Bradley. We look forward to continuing (and growing) this tradition in the future!

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your generous support!

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

For I was hungry and you gave me food.
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Matthew 25:35

On April 27th Jim Manore, Dave & Kathie Bradley, Lindsay Gaspari and her students from Brookview Montessori were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing a ham dinner for 77 guests. Those partaking enjoyed cookies baked by Kathi Anserello, Mary Alice Brunner, Frieda Williams, Keith Stevens & Merrily Smith.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Support

The Support Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

NOTICE

Fortify & Fly's Worship Enhancement Team has spent many hours working on the accessibility, flexibility, and enhancement of our worship area in order to allow folks of varying abilities and ages to get the most out of their worship experience with the greatest of ease and safety. The result has been a change from pews to chairs, and we are awaiting the final proposals for flooring and the addition of a ramp into the chancel area, with expenses for that project approved at January's annual meeting.

While not technically part of the Fortify & Fly project, the Worship Enhancement Team has made a recommendation to the council that new liturgical furnishings (altar table, pulpit, and baptismal font) be purchased with the use of undesignated memorial funds. These pieces will provide greater flexibility, due to size and design, and complement our new chairs in the color and kind of wood used. The council has approved this expenditure to be brought to the congregation for their approval, as any non-budgeted expenditure of over $5,000 requires.

The meeting is scheduled for

Sunday, June 4,

following our 10am worship service. Questions can be directed to Pastor Joan, Karen Johnson, or Kathie Bradley.

Other Bits of Awesomeness

Well done, friends!

For Earth Day 2023, we challenged ourselves to purchase at least half of a simple water well to provide up to 500 underprivileged families with access to clean safe water. Well (no pun intended), we achieved that and more! Through generous contributions from the Saron community totaling $2,560, we were able to purchase an entire well plus two water filters (see below) through ELCA Good Gifts. Thanks to all who contributed. We are making a difference!

* * * * * * *

When safe drinking water just isn't available – especially in times following natural disasters or emergencies – a simple ceramic water filter is a lifesaver. Capable of purifying water without electricity or chemicals, a water filter is a powerful, reliable way to provide safe water when it's needed most.

Connecting with God – It's All about Giving Back

Berrien County Cancer Service

We received a letter from Berrien County Cancer Service, thanking us for our donation of $90.80 (our Pennies for Patients collection container) and for allowing them to use our space as a collection site on May 11. All the money collected is staying in our community to help individuals and families impacted by cancer.
Nice job, Saron!

The Women's retreat was a great day of "Connections!"

Blessed

We are always happy to have special instrumental or vocal treats, such as this offering by Piper and dad, Marcus.

As our choir begins a much-deserved break for the summer, we thank you for allowing us to listen as you shared your gifts with God. The time and dedication it took were sincerely appreciated as you enhanced our worship experience in so many ways.

Now that our program year has ended, we thank all our Learning Hour leaders and subs for making this a successful year of learning and growing our relationships with God and each other!

SARONS SENIORS

Grant Gacek

Grant is graduating from Lakeshore High School and will be attending Southwestern Michigan College in the fall, living on campus. He will be doing general studies with a focus on History and Auto Mechanics.

Addison Osgood

Addison is graduating from St. Joseph High School and will be attending Western Michigan University in the fall. She is undecided on her major at this time.

Molly Becker

Molly is graduating from St. Joseph High School. She will be attending the University of Nebraska – Lincoln in the fall, majoring in Nutrition, Exercise & Health Science with the intention of continuing on into Physical Therapy.

June 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal	**2**	**3**
4 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour **11am Congregational Meeting**	**5** 11am Prayer Group	**6** 6pm Bible Study	**7** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm LAST Forum & Fellowship (until fall)	**8** 9:30am Bible Study	**9**	**10**
11 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**12** 11am Prayer Group	**13** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**14** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Deborah Circle	**15** 9:30am Bible Study **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**16**	**17**
18 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**19** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Church Council	**20** 6pm Bible Study	**21** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Forum & Fellowship	**22** 9:30am Bible Study **Soup Kitchen Day**	**23**	**24**
25 **SARON FORTIFIED CELEBRATION** 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**26** 11am Prayer Group **Pastor on Vacation**	**27** 6pm Bible Study	**28** 9am Helping Hands NO Zoom Coffee	**29**	**30**	

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

Celebrate Saron Fortified!

Sunday, June 25

Two accomplishments.

One party!

We have two big milestones that need to be celebrated – we made the last payment on our mortgage and are now debt free AND our fund-raising efforts through the Fortify & Fly campaign have exceeded our goal! Let's celebrate!

Construction of the narthex was completed in 2001. The addition to our building gave us a welcoming space to gather before and after services, an additional classroom, bathrooms, and an elevator. We've been making mortgage payments for more than 20 years and are happy to now remove that line item from the budget.

The Fortify & Fly campaign began in 2019 to allow for building repairs/improvements, developing a strong branding for the church, adding diversity attractions, and addressing staffing. We received pledges of $371,165 and are happy to report our collections have exceeded that goal! Quite an accomplishment considering the impact of the pandemic. Many improvements funded by Fortify & Fly are visible, such as the sanctuary seating, while others are behind the scenes, such as roof repairs. Others are still to come, including technology improvements for sharing our services online.

Time to give ourselves a pat on the back! We will celebrate these accomplishments on Sunday, June 25 during the church service and afterwards with an ice cream social. All are welcome!